Oral History Cover Sheet

Name: George Kubik
Date of Interview: September 27, 2006
Location of Interview: Eagan, Minnesota
Interviewer: Dorothe Norton

Approximate years worked for Fish and Wildlife Service: 1969-

Offices and Field Stations Worked, Positions Held: Inner Agency Board of Examiners, Soil Service Commission; Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service; USFWS Personnel Management; Regional Information Technology Transfer Officer, Senior Computer Management Specialist in finance

Most Important Projects: Helped computerized data transfer at stations in Region 3, developed a regional information data center for Region 3

Colleagues and Mentors: Arthur Harkins, William Sontag, Eugene Spika, Pete Bahn, Lester Horne, Gene Kasperson, Goodman K. Larson, Audrey Berg, Dan Miller, Doc Elders, Art Benoll, Harlene Loftis, Bobby Franz, Richard Huber, Bob Welford, Ed Crozier, Dr. Jack Gross, Marvin Moriarity, Dale Geving, Bryce Shuman

Most Important Issues: Information transfer, communication with other agencies, and the future of the Fish and Wildlife Service

Brief Summary of Interview: In the beginning of the interview, Mr. Kubik talks briefly about his early childhood, the different places he grew up, and his education. Mr. Kubik then moves on to describe his time in the Soil Service Commission in St. Louis before he goes into his time working in Personnel Management for the Fish and Wildlife Service. The interview continues with Mr. Kubik describing various things he had to do as a Personnel Manager. Mr. Kubik would then work as a Regional Information Technology Transfer Officer, which he continues to talk about with various anecdotes until he reaches the disbandment of the Office of Biological Services. He finishes the interview by talking about his time as a Senior Computer Management Specialist and how he thinks the Fish and Wildlife Service needs to plan better for the future.

Keywords: history, biography, employee, personnel, GIS, recruiting, resource management, assistive technologies, biologists, collaboration, fisheries management, international conservation, management

National Heritage Team of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Oral History Program
Subject/USFW Retiree: Kubik, George
Date: Wednesday, September 27, 2006
Interviewed by: Dorothe Norton

Dorothe:
Well, George, thank you for the good directions, it was easy to find your house, and I'm glad that you had the time this morning that we could do this interview.

George Kubik:
Thank you.

Dorothe:
So now I will start by asking you where and what date you were born?

George Kubik:
I was born June 23, 1943 at Camp Stoneman, California; it was a military base. My father was George and mother Genevieve. I am currently married, my wife Virginia or Ginny, and have a son, John, and daughter, Laura. My parents were military, worked closely in intelligence over the years, so we traveled a lot, and we lived in Eastern and Western Europe, and Russia and Japan. By the time I graduated from college, it was 37 schools.

Dorothe:
Where did you go to high school?

George Kubik:
I hit several different high schools, actually.

Dorothe:
Where did you graduate, which high school?

George Kubik:
I graduated locally here, Monroe High School in St. Paul.

Dorothe:
Monroe?

George Kubik:
Yes.

Dorothe:
Monroe High School! My gosh, George, that used to be the high school where we all went to see the boys because we liked them better than the boys at our high school!

George Kubik:
Oh, well, I think that's always typical no matter where you go to school.

Dorothe:
As a matter of fact I had a blind date with Nick Mancini one time, Mancini of Char House. He's in a nursing home.

George Kubik:
Oh yeah, sure.

Dorothe:
Okay, so you graduated from Monroe High School, and then?

George Kubik:
And both the University of Minnesota undergraduate and graduate school, and The College of St. Thomas, I graduated as an undergrad at The College of St. Thomas.

Dorothe:
Was your graduation from high school about 1961?

George Kubik:
Yes, 1961, you're very good.

Dorothe:
Okay, and then so you graduated with a bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota?

George Kubik:
No, it was from The College of St. Thomas.

Dorothe:
Oh, St. Thomas, and what was your degree?

George Kubik:
Well, I had many different ones! It was international law and international relations.

Dorothe:
Okay, and did you go on then for a masters?

George Kubik:
I went on for a masters and I am completing my doctorate now. The graduate school said it was time to get out after almost 30 years of graduate school! I was one of those students that started in the ‘80s with anthropology, and worked onto "Zs" in zoology. And after about 15 to 20 departments, they get a little upset! So, we are graduating, I hope, this coming May or June.

Dorothe:
You are teaching over there too, aren't you?

George Kubik:
I teach occasionally.

Dorothe:
Okay, because I didn't realize you were still a student.

George Kubik:
Yes, I've been a full-time student for many, many years, many decades, actually.

Dorothe:
Well, that's great.

George Kubik:
I stopped counting after the first 200 or 300 credits.

Dorothe:
When you get your PhD, what will that be in?

George Kubik:
It's in an area called Futures Research, and my thesis topic is the future of Fish and Wildlife work, and specifically in work conduct and work force preparation. It takes a very different view than is commonly used in our work force projections. I worked on Coyers before I left the service, and this winds it up a bit and looks 20, 30, 50 years down the line, and it tells a number of international interviews and very extensive literature reviews of the topic. So, it is very interesting.

Dorothe:
I bet, yes. So did you ever hunt or fish when you were a kid?

George Kubik:
We fished, my father hunted, I went on the hunts but I didn't hunt myself, my passion was more into fishing. I still have my first fishing reel; a (unclear) we bought in Germany in 1951 or 1952, and it still works.

Dorothe:
Isn't that something! So you never went in the military then?

George Kubik:
I was not in the military; I trained in ROTC for several years, I did extremely well in navigation, but they found out I was color blind later. So you don't want too many color blind navigators in the Air Force. That was during the Vietnam era and, of course, they were taking most anyone, but decided against that, so. I had a student deferment, so I took (unclear).

Dorothe:
Okay, when you were in your college years and all, did you have a mentor or anybody that particularly helped you stay and encouraged you to get these degrees?

George Kubik:
I've had one for the last 20 to 25 years, Dr. Harkins, Arthur Harkins, and he became a very close, professional friend as well as colleague. We just posted a new book together, as a matter of fact, along your line; it's a book on what we call StoryTech, which is the science and technology of narration, how to tell stories in a constructive way.

Dorothe:
You're writing that book?

George Kubik:
I have completed it, yes.

Dorothe:
You have completed it?

George Kubik:
It's already on the market, yes.

Dorothe:
Well, wonderful! Now tell me the name of that again.

George Kubik:
It's StoryTech, The Guide for the 21st Century.

Dorothe:
George, that's wonderful!

George Kubik:
We have another planned behind that, and hopefully a third one.

Dorothe:
It takes a long time to write a book doesn't it?

George Kubik:
Well, that particular one we did!

Dorothe:
How many years, Ginny?

Ginny Kubik:
No, none of that, that wasn't years!

George Kubik:
That was a couple of months we put that one together, and I did the layout for it as well as shared in the development of the (unclear). But we now post that on CD so people can use it electronically, and it's listed as (unclear).

Dorothe:
Well, since you didn't have any military service, then the next thing I want to know is, when and where and how you met your wife.

George Kubik:
Well, let me back up. I didn't have military service but we always lived in the military.

Dorothe:
Oh, okay, so you did ROTC.

George Kubik:
We lived on bases and whatnot throughout the world. My mother, as a matter of fact, worked for the Jewish underground at one point out in California; they would smuggle in Jews and give them false passports and put them in different places in the United States; it was before the United States would accept the Jews. My father worked in a variety of areas; he was at the Nuremberg Trials during World War II, he was a spy in other areas, he hunted Nazi war criminals in Russia, so he had an adventurous life, too.

Dorothe:
Did you keep a little journal or anything, like from all the different places you lived?

George Kubik:
That was not permitted for us.

Dorothe:
Oh, because I just think that would be the most interesting. Of course when you get to be an adult, then you think, boy if I was... but when you're young you're used to enjoying the place itself, whatever it is. Did you have any hobbies or anything when you were a kid?

George Kubik:
Just reading, a lot of reading, extensive reading. A lot of the places we lived in were not equipped with libraries, as a matter of fact, were not equipped with anything. We lived in some places that they air dropped the food and water in, that's primitive by today's standards (unclear) economy. An unusual time in Europe, there were still people starving to death in the streets of Germany. My mother used to run a soup kitchen out of the back of the house to feed people because they would always give us fairly large quantities of food with the military, and so she ran soup kitchens out of the back of the house. Very unusual, you know, (unclear) very bad, hard times for a lot of people.

Dorothe:
So how and where and when did you meet your wife?

George Kubik:
We interestingly enough met in the library, where we both worked! So, books have been a common thread for us, as you've probably noticed. We have 2,000 or 3,000 books in our house, which tends to be in place of the floor here a little bit.

Ginny:
And we think books are sacred, you know, George doesn't want me to turn the corners over in anything that I do on my own paperbacks! Keep them perfectly pristine!

George Kubik:
Well, I write in mine, so it's a fair trade. That's how we met, and we've been reading books ever since. But we travel a lot, we attempt to get out at least two or three times a week, and travel around the different states, we enjoy that. And Ginny enjoys the gardening as you've already noted. So it's a nice life.

Dorothe:
Okay, so when did you get married?

George Kubik:
We got married, and I'm going to need some help...

Ginny:
This is a test!

George Kubik:
I know it was May 1st because that was the opening day of smelt season, and her brother and I asked if we could go out smelt fishing and delay the wedding! That was not received very well!

Dorothe:
Where did you get married, here in Minnesota?

George Kubik:
We got married in Minneapolis, at one of the Union Halls as I recall that we had the reception.

Ginny:
Yes, but we were married at St. Patrick's in St. Paul, and it was in 1971.

George Kubik:
In 1971? That's what I would have guessed!

Dorothe:
Do you have any kids, you had told me before.

George Kubik:
We have two, Jonathan and our daughter Laura. They both live here in the cities, our daughter is in St. Paul and our son in Minneapolis, so very close and very nice.

Dorothe:
What are they doing now? Did they go to college like you did and learn as much?

George Kubik:
Well, they've been to college. Our daughter has an advanced degree; their interests are different than mine of course, in the arts, which is good. They left out the art gene when it came to me, and inserted the science and technology gene instead, but it's good to get variety. Our son is very technically oriented, and has worked a great deal with computers.

Dorothe:
Well good. Okay, well, now we'll go to your career. Was there any particular reason you thought you would like to work for the Service?

George Kubik:
I'm excited to work for the Fish and Wildlife Service. I'm going to back up and just indicate just the two prior ones, and then we'll lead into that if that's all right with you. I started Service October 10, 1966; I worked for the Inner Agency Board of Examiners, was part of the then Soil Service Commission, it was newly formed, our regional office was out of St. Louis, it was headed by Sontag (William Sontag), and his second was Nicholson. And here in the state we had Eugene Spika, who headed the Soil Service Commission. They put me to work with Pete Bahn and Les Horne; Les Horne was one of the best supervisors I've ever had in my life. I still remember to this day. He had a big sign over his desk that said: *Regulations are a guide and not a substitute for judgment*.

Dorothe:
Oh, and what was his name, Pete?

George Kubik:
Les Horne, Lester Horne.

Ginny:
That's H-o-r-n-e.

Dorothe:
Okay.

George Kubik:
He was a wonderful man. We did recruiting and examining for the state of Minnesota plus eleven other states in the science and technology areas. We also did personal management reuse for different agencies. Fish and Wildlife was one of them at that time, that's why (unclear). In 1968, I went over to the regional office at the Department of Justice, it was Immigration and Naturalization Service, and worked with Gene Kasperson and Pat, their office was over in Highland Park in St. Paul. The Soil Service was located in Building 57 in Fort Snelling, not very far from where our present regional office is for the Fish and Wildlife. It was very interesting because it was a converted residence, so our files were "A through L" in the men's rooms and "M through Z" in the women's room! And if you turned on the copy machine, all the lights in the building dimmed, it was that kind of a building! And parts of our offices were in the attic space! It used to be the government offices were none too plush! As I found when we moved to the Buzza Building, which brings me to the Fish and Wildlife Service. I had been working in classification, labor relations, and was the regional training officer for Immigration; we had about 24 states at that time, so it was a big region. Coming to the Fish and Wildlife Service, and that was over in 1000 Sixth West Lake Street.

Dorothe:
And what year was that?

George Kubik:
That was March 17, 1969.

Dorothe:
Okay, the year we moved to the Federal Building...

George Kubik:
I was just in the Buzza Building a short time before we moved; it was an old warehouse as you know.

Dorothe:
Yes.

George Kubik:
Very old and partially renovated.

Dorothe:
And bad parking, you had to get there a little earlier than when you had to start, and then you had to walk three or four blocks!

George Kubik:
Yes, it was certainly an old warehouse, that didn't change any. At that time we had the region of 12 states as I recall.

Dorothe:
No 11, or was it 12?

George Kubik:
We had 11, but we had research stations in a 12th state.

Dorothe:
Okay, yes because I know when I started there were 11; I started in 1965.

George Kubik:
The region was formally created with 11 but we had external sites in another state. It depends on how you count it, but you're right, formally it was 11. At that time, of course, we serviced research, which was spread out a little bit more.

Dorothe:
But you started with us in personnel?

George Kubik:
I started in personnel management. I worked with Goodman K. Larson, who was a personnel officer, Audrey Berg, who was the assistant, and Dan Miller, who was third in command. I was brought over because they had never run a reduction force and they were looking for someone who was familiar across the board with soil service regulations, and hence the experience with the Soil Service and with Immigration and those areas. An unfortunate time in our history and the service; that was the time we were closing the Job Corps Centers in large scale. We had worked, let's see Ottawa, Job Corps at Brooklyn, Ohio, and we had Tamarack Job Corps at Tamarack, Minnesota, and Agassiz, Job Corps at Agassiz, Minnesota, Middle River, Minnesota, I guess it was. And that was a very difficult time; that's one of the early things that impressed me about the Fish and Wildlife Service. We had to close those centers and a lot of people lost their jobs. These were in remote areas and they were thrown on some very hard times. In my particular case, I was heading the Fort Clinton closure, and we had three suicides or what were apparent suicides, and I remember Goodman calling a group together and saying, "You know, first be humane, whatever you do here, we can figure out the regulations later, but you treat these people well." And when we got news of these, and people cracked because of the situation, it spoke very well of the agency, I thought, that they cared enough about people who do that.

Dorothe:
Do we still have one now down in Missouri where JC Bryant had been?

George Kubik:
We still have Mingo Job Corps Center in southern Missouri; it's located next to Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge and joining the SIU (Southern Illinois University). That is still in operation; those were all funded by the Department of Labor but administered by a variety of agencies; the Fish and Wildlife Service was only one, U.S. Forest Service was another. There were public groups that administered outside of the

federal government, and there were private groups that administered to the camps, so there was quite a variety. But eventually the money for those camps dried up, and it's unfortunate, because it was a good start for a lot of young people.

When I first came, Burwell was the regional director, Bob Burwell. We had about 815 employees as I recall, and that swelled up to about 1,200 to 1,300 in the summers; we brought on 200 to 300 summer students, plus a lot of temps. I've never seen that since in the Fish and Wildlife Service, but it provided excellent opportunity for the students to view the Fish and Wildlife Service and for us to view them. So, in my way of thinking, it was a wonderful program. We brought in the summer students and they were treated like summer interns in many cases. This was a time when jobs were very difficult to get in the Fish and Wildlife Service, as they still are today. But it was not unusual to get 100 to 120 applications for a job, any job. These students were that desperate for work. And if you'd go out on a refuge, it was not unusual to find two or three PhDs digging ditches as wage grade laborers, thinking they might have the opportunity with some experience to get in, and it did work that way for some of them. But it was a very difficult time for students, graduate and undergraduate, to get employment in the field. And, of course, it has had a very irregular history since that time, too. We had, as I said, about 100 to 150 in the regional office; it varied depending on how you counted them and what time of year.

I know I was impressed very early on when we worked in the Buzza Building; do you recall Don Riley, the regional director?

Dorothe:
Yes, yes.

George Kubik:
Well, he had ordered a lens for his enlarger, and it was supposed to be an eight-inch glass lens, and while I was there, there was a knock on the door with a fellow with a crane outside, and he had ordered this surplus from the military. Well, it wasn't eight inches, it was eight foot, that was over a ton of glass! So they literally, that day, had to break a hole in the wall! They couldn't take it back, so we broke a hole in the wall and brought it in through the second story window, and it's probably still there! I can't imagine anyone taking it out. But there was a time that you didn't look too closely at the regulations or ask permission to do much, you just went ahead and did it, and that impressed me. Just to break a hole in the wall and get that lens put away! It was very interesting in those days; there was a very close attachment with the field operations, as you know, Dorothe, and it still is, to a degree, but very heavily then. When you had a retirement, it was not unusual to get 100 to 200 people there. I remember Goodman's was just a little over 200 people that we had, Goodman Larson. It was very interesting when most of our people came from the field. I believe Goodman, who was the personnel officer, he had come from Grand Island, Nebraska as a biologist, Fish and Wildlife biologist, so a lot of our staff, whether admin or operations, were biologists (unclear) as a matter of a fact. And when he retired we had a couple hundred people. And it was interesting; one of the gifts would normally be a container of dirt from one or more of the refuges or hatcheries that

they had worked at, because these people popularly aligned themselves as dirt biologists. They might be a personnel officer, they might be a finance officer, but they were dirt biologists first. So, dirt was a familiar gift at those retirements, you probably remember some of those.

Dorothe:
Oh yes!

George Kubik:
And yet there was a curious detachment with the past; we came across when we were moving from the Buzza Building a little over one hundred glass plates that were negatives, and they had been taken during the very early days of hatcheries and wildlife refuge development. These were people who were coming off a train and hand carrying the old metal containers up the hill to put in the ponds, and when we located those, they were destroyed. It was said we didn't have the storage space. And we met several of those (unclear) out of fisheries, and myself and two or three others met with the regional director and asked them to make a contribution of these to a Historical Society or something to save them and we were directed, no, those had to be destroyed. So we lost a precious opportunity there. That was counterpoint to my way of thinking to the Corps of Engineers plates that were discovered here a few years back. I saw a few of the plates; they were incredibly old and very wonderful. It's a shame to lose something like that in our history. So that all the more emphasizes what you're doing today as important, because it is lost too quickly.

At that time, Fish and Wildlife Service was generally acknowledged, anywhere you wanted to be, the leader in Fish and Wildlife biology in this country, there was no question. The states had not yet developed or implemented full professional standards, many of them without degrees in their enforcement for example, as you know. I was just on the cusp of that. Our enforcement group was directing that new hires would be professional, either law enforcement or fish and wildlife biology backgrounds and degrees. Prior to that, we had many people both in refuges, particularly in hatcheries, and some went into law enforcement that had worked their way up without a professional degree. So that was a radical change force at that time, and that was going on, as I said. When I first came, it just started, and we were implementing that very rapidly. At that time enforcement, as you know better than I, many of the people came from the states that worked 10, 15, 20 years with the state and then came over with the feds.

Dorothe:
Because the pay was better in those days!

George Kubik:
So we had many interesting and colorful people. There are many, many stories about those early days that are probably best left unsaid!

Dorothe:
Yes, I think so too.

George Kubik:
But it was a desirable place to work; the amount of applications for any position was way up there, it was unusual to get below 30 or 40, and frequently well over 100. We were at the peak then, and it was because of the experience of the people, it wasn't necessarily the book knowledge, but the experience they brought with them from across the country, different assignments. I think the only doctorate we had in the regional office was Doc Elders. And Doc Elder's PhD was acquired by virtue of his work with the contaminants, and it was a requirement of the job. And the reason I know that is when the Executive Order 10998 came out in our Labor Management Relations, we had to have an election to determine if there was going to be a union in the regional office or not. At first I really thought that was very insulting they would even consider having a union; I was representing management at that time. In going through the Taft-Hartley definitions, I found that only one person in the regional office was a professional in their eyes. This so incensed the biologists, they went up to the regional director, and I said, "Well, you know, it's the law, I can't change that, that's a definition of requirement." And so he took it to Chicago, which was the regional office for Soil Service at that time, and they said, "Well, that's the right interpretation." Then they went to Washington and some deal was cut there eventually. So, they were all declared professionals, and that seemed to satisfy our biologists. But technically, it was only Doc Elder.

Dorothe:
Is he still alive do you think?

George Kubik:
I have not heard from Doc Elder for a long time, he had some health problems, and that was many, many decades ago.

Dorothe:
He is not in the directory that we are working with of retirees, and so I can't find him.

George Kubik:
I wonder if some of the professional societies, because he was very great on....

Dorothe:
His first name was Jim, right?

George Kubik:
Yes.

Dorothe:
I remember him.

George Kubik:

Yes, a good man, very knowledgeable. As I was saying, most of our credibility was based on the experience of the people; this was to change quite radically very soon after that. But at that time we were number one, and nobody questioned our authority, our expertise, and our right to direct us. Very soon the states started emerging as major players, as they professionalized their own internal houses and they started to develop their organizational capability.

Dorothe:
So how long did you work in personnel? About three?

George Kubik:
I was in personnel until 1974, and during the time with Art Benoll, who had worked with me at the Civil Service Commission, had come over.

Dorothe:
Oh, was there Harlene?

George Kubik:
Harlene Loftis, yes. I don't know what became of her, she transferred.

Dorothe:
She went up to Alaska, but I understand that she had passed away.

George Kubik:
That is possible, I don't know. We were just talking about the AO and not refuges, the one that's just retiring.

Dorothe:
Dee Dee?

George Kubik:
No, I'm sorry, in refuges, the one that's just retiring now.

Dorothe:
Oh, Bobby.

George Kubik:
Yes, Bobby Franz; Bobby was also at the Civil Service Commission with me.

Dorothe:
Oh, for crying out loud!

George Kubik:
So it's a small world sometimes in the personnel area. We had a couple of other people we picked up over the years that rotated through very quickly, but those two stayed with us until they retired. So I thought that spoke very well. This was a time when there was

a lot of turmoil going on. Remember James Watt, who directed that we reverse the direction of the buffalo, it had to face west instead of east. So we had to repaint all the cars, change all the stationery, cost us a small fortune, and at that time the Service did not have very much in the way of operating funds. We'd go out to a refuge or hatchery, and it was pretty bleak in terms of what they had to work with.

Dorothe:
So was law enforcement when I started, so different than it is.

George Kubik:
Yes, as a matter of fact I used to rotate computers under the cover, so to speak, to enforcement to get them equipped with machines when there was (unclear). We would give a priority to enforcement because they had the least money, and still do probably. But we got them equipped, until at least every station had one or more computers before we left.

Dorothe:
Okay, so when you left personnel, is that what you went into, computer work?

George Kubik:
Well, yes. Let me back up a little bit. I'll give you a couple of asides, they're probably just that, I don't know if they are any interest to your recorders or not. One was the 50-yard rule, which I instituted in personnel. We used to do administrative assistant visits, what they were was personnel management inspections; we'd do classification audits, check out the station, and make sure that everything was up to snuff. And of course one of the big no-no's at that time was stocking materials that you weren't using directly. And, of course, every hatchery and refuge had a need for heavy equipment, none of which they could afford, so we'd get those surplus. But, since they didn't have money to repair them, what they would do is get three of them whenever they got anything. So if you acquired a D7 from the military, you had two more in the woods, and these are big pieces of equipment, big bulldozers, big trucks, TD26s, D7s, D8s, big pieces of equipment. So what I said is, when I sent off my messages and later the other people in personnel adopted, we would said, "Well, it's against regulations to stockpile these types of materials; however, I only travel within 50 yards of the station headquarters, and that's all I'm going to hold you accountable for." And so you could see just beyond the 100-yard line an array of vehicles stashed in the woods everywhere you went! I don't know how many were back there but there were a lot. And those were easy kinds of using common sense on what you were doing, and it just became understood that we wouldn't look any further than we had to for heavy equipment storage, knowing full well they had a lot of it.

These stations were so poor. I came across one refuge that had gotten a military surplus truck and it used oil so badly, and they didn't have money for repair that they had welded on a 50-gallon oil drum that fed the oil directly in to keep the oil level up so they could run the truck!

Research, we had a research station on the Great Lakes, and it was just down below the bluffs, and of course they had this winding road that went down to the station, and they did not have money for plowing and so they got a military surplus truck, a big one, the motor didn't work, but what they would do is they'd tow it up to the top of the bluffs in the fall, and whenever they had a snow fall they'd tie the wheel so it went to the left, and they would get another vehicle and shove it down the road, so it would just scrape with this blade all the way down until it arrived at the bottom, and that's how they cleaned their roads for a long time. We finally caught up with that and said, "We'll get you some money for this!"

Dorothe:
Was that up in Marquette?

George Kubik:
I won't mention the station name, but you're awfully warm! At that time too, we had the three research vessels on the Great Lakes, and I was always curious because we had two that were of uniform length, and one that was substantially shorter. And in talking with the old research personnel there, I found out what it was; when they originally built that, they had money from the Congress for three ships, so they built the first two according to specs, and they ran low on money on the third one, so they just took 30% off of the end of the boat and chopped it off right there! So that's why we have two long boats and one short boat. I don't think you will find that in your records too!

I used to see a lot of difference on visitor use on refuges; for example, I had a field trip with a young intern, we went off to do a field inspection at Horicon Refuge in Mayville, Wisconsin, and we got there and we couldn't locate it. So we went into the town and asked around and, of course, they had never heard of one of the largest waterfowl refuges, certainly in the mid-west, maybe in the United States, never heard of it!

Dorothe:
And all the geese?

George Kubik:
Yes, all the geese flying, just over continuing! Never heard of the place! And we'd go back and forth, back and forth. Finally, we tried a couple of back roads and I found the station, and I asked the manager, I said, "Well, you know, I know you had money in your budget for signage out here, what happened to the signs?" And his reply, "Well, we were just getting too many visitors to handle, so we took the signs out." We did write that one up; that one got changed.

Dorothe:
When I went to Horicon one time, Gus Bonde was the agent in Madison, the senior man. He told me I couldn't say what I said on the radio to him, I was trying to find him and I couldn't!

George Kubik:

That was a seat-of-the-pants typology in many cases; I recall a briefing in the regional office on Horicon, and it was given by a flyway biologist and he had just flown the day before, and he said we have 70,500 geese on Horicon Refuge.

Dorothe:
Like 200,000 sometimes!

George Kubik:
And about 15 minutes later we had one of the other biologists come in who had been doing census counts up there, and he said, "Gee, we have 140,000." And the regional director looked at him and said, "When was that?" And he said, "Yesterday." And they had both flown this area about a half hour apart, so the differences of 70,000 to almost a whole of that number in one 2 hour period. So it was not uncommon to get quite a variation. At that time it was experience, it was very difficult to get the transects lined up so that the different divisions and programs would get agreement on it, and of course the science (unclear). But it's amazing how well they did at times; I was always mystified by that, most of the times they were almost right on the button.

Dorothe:
Well the first time I drove down there I almost wrecked the car because I'm looking at the sky, thinking I can't believe all those geese, and looking back at the road went "oops!" I got back in time, but it was just amazing.

George Kubik:
That was amazing out there, and then not to have visitor signs!

Dorothe:
Yes, here are you are in the middle of nowhere.

George Kubik:
We just completed the section on Horicon Refuge; I'm going to go to Guttenberg National Fish Hatchery which was in Guttenberg, Iowa, located in northeastern Iowa. The chief of the fish hatchery was Eldon Saeugling, you probably remember the name, Eldon had been there so long that he was off the end of the retirement charts by a number of years, indicating probably 45 to 50 years of service, I don't know the exact number. I do recall he introduced me to his two boys, as he called them, they were both in their mid to late 60s, and these were the other two hatchery members. When you went down for the first time to Guttenberg, Iowa, unbeknownst because it was not totally beforehand, Guttenberg Hatchery was an old warm water hatchery, they had some ponds out on the island there on the Mississippi, and you would get the tour and then Eldon would invite you to lunch, and as you were finishing your lunch, at the rotary club usually, Eldon would stand up and he would introduce you as their guest speaker, so you were expected to talk for the next hour and, of course, that was news to you at that time. And this was the way he humiliated the regional office people, he did this to everyone, it didn't matter if they were an ARD or a personnel specialist, he was uniform in his treatment. In going through Eldon's station review, I had the chance to look up in the attic of one of the

raceway buildings and I found something very peculiar; I found 5,000 ax handles, and these were well made ax handles. I asked Eldon, he was with me at the time, I said, "Eldon, what are you doing with all these ax handles?" And he said, "Well, you never know when you need a few for spares." I said, "But you got 5,000 of these up here, how long have you had those?" And he said, "I don't remember." I said, "Well, I can jog your memory because they are marked WPA." And he said, "Well, we use them for trade once in awhile." And if you ever went to stations on any regular basis, you found everyone specialized in trade items, they would trade with the other hatcheries, the other refuges. Well these were among their trade items. And I said, "Okay, well just don't order any more." We let it go at that. And as I was going through the raceways, I'm not a biologist or wasn't at that time, and the fish looked a little strange, so I had him pull up a net full for me and of course they were goldfish. What he did is he had a certain number of raceways where he'd seined goldfish in the river and he would put them in there, so that any family that came through town with children with them, he would give them a plastic bag full of goldfish and some fish hatchery fish food to go with it. And that was just standard, that was immense public relations for the town, it was almost an advertised event for a family coming through, to see the raceways and go home with some goldfish.

Dorothe:
Was that in Iowa?

George Kubik:
Yes, it was in northeastern Iowa right along the river. It was an interesting station for another reason; we had the algae eater assigned there, and the algae eater was a fish hatchery employee who had worked for the National Aquarium in Washington, and he had the rather disgusting habit of eating the fish out of the tanks as the student groups would come through. So it was decided to put him in Guttenberg, Iowa, where he could be less of a problem, and he did change his ways; he took up eating the algae out of the raceways. He would grab big hand fulls as the student groups came through and swallow it down! We never cured him of that habit. We did have some other difficulties, no names on this so I guess it's all right, but we had him at three sanity hearings, and at the third one, he kept passing each one, passed the third one; at the third one he hopped up on top of the table of our hearing, did a little dancing jig, waved his papers and said, "Look, I'm the only one in the room that can prove I'm sane." He was there, we closed the hatchery finally, and he was still there. He had managed to get hold of some congressman, and three or four years later he was still there as a caretaker, so I don't know what eventually happened to him.

Dorothe:
What was his name?

George Kubik:
I'd rather not say for the record here because of the events that we had with the sanity hearings.

Dorothe:

Well, I can look up and see if he's on the directory list; I was going to bring that with me but I didn't. You can tell me when we're not recording.

George Kubik:
We had further difficulties because he at one point turned off all the water to the hatchery, and when we asked him why he said, "Nobody told me you couldn't do that." But the old algae eater, he was there for a long time, he added a lot of color. Eldon himself was a very colorful character. I use this only as an example of one station; there were many others. One time we had a request by a congressman who wanted to see a certain species of fish from the Mississippi in the National Aquarium, so Eldon took the hatchery trap and went down to the river and seined a number of these fish, put them in the hatchery truck and drove to Washington with it, and has pictures of himself shaking hands with the congressman as a result. His superiors were none too happy with that, just taking a hatchery truck for a couple of weeks to drive to Washington and back, but very interesting.

The Job Corps centers were always an interesting review when we were down there. At one point I was down there with the safety officer, regional safety officer, and we came across two young men working at chopping wood, and they had a very unique way of doing that; one would hold the logs between his legs, balancing with his hands, and the other would take a double bit axe and swing it from behind him to the front and chop the log in half. I thought the safety officer was going to faint! These were the types of things people who didn't know better, people who had never been in the woods. We had young men report that they had never been in a forest before, and they were afraid the trees were going to fall when the wind came up because they'd never seen the trees sway like that, inner city. My hat's off to the people who were able to work with youth and get them a viable skill, a GED normally, and a trade skill, and still is a wonderful accomplishment in my opinion. Good item for the Fish and Wildlife Service. Many of the Job Corps centers were staffed by among our better biologists, who were advised to take these opportunities in the Job Corps as a developmental opportunity. Unfortunately, when the Job Corps centers closed, they had to scramble for jobs in many cases. The chief of Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge was one of those; the refuge manager up there was formally the head of the Job Corps Center for example, and had been a very good biologist before he went over there too.

Labor relations; this was the beginning of labor relations in the Fish and Wildlife Service in the early 70s and late 60s. We had picked up, in one instance, from the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, the Fish (unclear), and they had many crews there, and we had a bargaining session with them early in the game, and the proposal that was made by the employees of the bargaining unit there included the right to haul a beer wagon behind the government vehicles. What they would do, and, of course, they were on the road all the time, they wanted the authority to take an iced beer trailer with them. What they would do is buy large amounts of beer in the nearby town they’re traveling through, ice it down and haul it behind the government vehicles. Now in the past they had been doing it anyway, but they wanted to be formally recognized as a bargaining unit, the right to haul

the beer wagons. Needless to say, we did not condone hauling the beer wagons, but they were very upset with us for a long time.

The next travel I made was to the Office of Biological Services in 1974; I went over there because I found a box under a table one day that was unopened. I wasn't being rather nosey but opened up the box and it turned out to be the first mini-computer, micro-computer technically, that I'd ever seen. As a matter of fact, that was the only one that anyone had ever seen. It was an old Hewlett Packard, a 9830A, it had 9.7 megabytes, a hard disc, a 32 digit alphanumeric LED display, there was no screen on it, of course, a small cassette, about 180 KB driver for putting in new data, and it had a dual-core memory of 8K, 8,000 bytes. We stopped to think the day of 1 gigabyte as being the norm, this was 8,000. It was programmable only in a very elemental form of HP basic at the time. One of them had been provided to each region as it turned out, as part of the habitat evaluation procedure development, except nobody knew what it was, there were no instructions, and nobody could operate them. So the ARD asked if anybody knew how to operate these and I said, "Sure, I do." Of course I'd never seen one before. And he said, "Okay, well give us a briefing on it." And I said, "Well, give me an hour." I went into the men's room, because I wasn't supposed to be doing this at my desk, and read the manuals, and came back and told what a computer was all about, what we could do with it, and gave them a brief demonstration, which was the only demonstration I knew of how to program one. They said, "That's great." Dick Huber, Richard Huber, who is a fantastic manager and supervisor and a good friend, was heading the OBS Unit at that time in the region, and the OBS was under technological services, newly formed, just brand new. Bob Welford was the second in command, Bob Welford being a wonderful intellect, a very inquisitive man, and a very humane person. He, like Huber, was wonderful to work for, you couldn't ask for better supervisors. And they formed a very good biological team to develop OBS in the regions.

They invited me over and I gave several more briefings, and subsequently, I accepted the lateral reassignment at that time for the position of regional information technology transfer officer. I was the only one in the regions at that time; it was the first that had been done. There were ITS members on the national teams, the Eastern Energy and Land Use Team, West Energy and Land Use Team, and some of these National Wetland Inventory, but none of the regions. So we established the first; we set up a section for information and technology transfer, and it was incredible. That was probably the most enjoyable times that I ever had with Fish and Wildlife Service, exploring new opportunities. At that time OBS was staffed with the best biologists, the best scientists, the best technologists available anywhere. We took over, almost overnight, as undisputed leader in those sciences, there was no question; people would travel from all over the world to visit both the national teams and the regional teams to learn how to do this. Basically, OBS at that time was set up to, in some ways, develop and operationalize and then disseminate new developments in knowledge and innovation. So we had the instream field group, did instream field regime studies, we had the Western Energy and Land Use Team doing the oil shell studies, using GIS (Geographic Information Systems), which they introduced. The Alaskan Information Management System was an offshoot of that big project, GIS-based. We had the GIS implemented in our region with

the Extended Winter Navigation Project. The first GIS I recall seeing was under Ed Crozier, who was chief of the Refuge Planning Team, just shortly before that, probably the early 70s, he did that at the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge. There's a 16-mm film of that that was developed by the University of Minnesota, and the contract was with the University of Minnesota to do that. But these people refined it; they honed it down to a fine edge. When we had Dr. Jack Gross, who we had under agreement with us, and he was a Fish and Wildlife Service employee, headed the systems analysis group, the side group out of Ft. Collins, Colorado under (unclear). His was the first systematic study of biological applications that I saw, he used, what is termed general systems theory today. And we developed a friendship as we started to use him to head our projects up in Region 3, because we needed to get information quickly from both Canadian and American scientists, and put it in these GIS formats with the data background, and there was just literally tons of this information floating that would have never been gathered.

At that time, I had the opportunity to study under Dr. C.S. Holling up at the University of Vancouver, British Columbia; I studied under him about 2-1/2 years off and on. They took us up there for mathematical modeling using GISs, and it was a wonderful experience, an incredibly group up there. The only downside was that they kept irregular hours, they would come in about 10:00 to 10:30 in the morning and they'd work until 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning, so you had to readjust your schedule. That went on every day. But the drawback was they would stop every once in awhile, every couple of hours, and want to play volleyball. So it was the Vancouver scientists against the American scientists, and we never won a game, we never came close to winning a game! I was up there for two years before I found out they were the pace team for the Canadian Olympic Volleyball Group! Of course they wouldn't tell us that. But some of the foremost modelers in the world, these people were topnotch. Dr. Holling has since moved down to Florida State University, I think. But his work with the Canadian spruce budworm problem was a classic, and they still quote him. And he wrote a book under the auspices of the International Institute for Applied Systems out of Luxembourg, Austria; it's called Adaptive Environmental Assessment, and Adaptive Environmental Assessment was picked up first by Jack Gross and then later by Service and later by the Corps, and others; a fantastic tool. It got people thinking about ecosystems as systems. Now they didn't recognize the systems (unclear) this group operational asset. And really, it was a major breakthrough on how we dealt with biology after that; to look at them systematically in conjunction with computerized analysis and geospacial analysis, to develop new knowledge, to generate a lot of new knowledge and then quickly disseminate it.

We had some leading edge projects, the first of their kind; Dick Huber and I had one that was the first compilation of spawning the nursery atlases of the Great Lakes. Before, when you planted fish, you just took them out and you dumped them off, usually in some area that was known to you, but you didn't know what else was up and down the line, and when you're dealing with a body of water like the Great Lakes, it's very important to know where they're spawning a nursery, reefs for example. So we developed a contract and administered it to collect all the data from the Canadian and the American sides, and put into an electronic data base as an index to where this information was and to identify much of it. And you ran across some very unusual repositories, including one at a major

university; the professor had been collecting this data all of his career, and when he died they didn't know what to do with it, so they literally put his 9-track tapes and his notes in his office, and sealed up the office with bricks! We were never able to gain access to that one, but we gained a lot. And that set in motion the more scientific use of delivering those fisheries by the National Fish Hatchery System and, of course, that improved management immensely, insured survival and necessary food and production for those very fingerling-stage fish for its part.

We had another project for the first recorded multi-spectral scanning of the upper Mississippi River, and what this does is, it tells you the vegetation types, the depths to some extent, and a lot of other vital data to managing in the upper Mississippi, it had never been before. We hired Dr. Merle Meyer from the University of Minnesota. At that time he was one of the very few specialists in the United States who dealt with low-level spectral scanning, multi-spectral scanning, and he flew the transects for us and we compiled those into a series of colored publications. It went pool by pool down the river. Unfortunately, the Service and its humbling wisdom, when they disbanded OBS, took all those manuals and they were lost to the wind. They gave some to the states, some to public places, some to private, they never did recover any. It would have been invaluable today, and they're still segments of it floating around, it would be nice to reassemble those at some point, maybe the university still has some copies.

During that time we set up not only the first regional ITS office, we set up the first regional computer to remote sites, remote sensing center in the regions. It was the first time that computers had been institutionalized in a region and, of course, it was very meager start out with that old Hewlett Packard. To give you an idea of the naivete of the Service at that time and mine, the National Wetland Inventory began its work with two of those machines with 9-track tape extensions down in Florida to do the National Wetland Inventory of the United States. During a meeting, I just did a rough calculation, and using that approach, it would have taken us close to 300 years to complete the National Wildlife Inventory data.

Dorothe:
Wow, 300 years!

George Kubik:
Three hundred years using those two machines. Of course it was, in some respects, a ploy, we'll start the project and then ask for more money and, of course, that's how the National Wetland Inventory came into being vital to our agency, knowing where those wetlands and to be able to type them. But money was not forthcoming, so people just finessed, they started out with two machines they knew couldn't do the job, and as soon as it got started it was so popular that then it got funded. So in many cases, that's how projects were started, that's how our data center got started too. We started with that old 9830, knowing they could do next to nothing, but it planted ideas and pretty soon, there was enough money to start projects with the newer computers.

Some of these development centers, like Wildlife, I think they only had 30 fulltime

permanent people, 30-35, but the ranks were closer to 170 employees because they had all of these contract employees and temps and whatnot, so these were fairly big efforts. And we were always in the publications; you couldn't pick up a scientific publication without seeing Fish and Wildlife Service in it.

The big attraction in introducing wide scale GIS and an awareness of these new technologies, at that time I hired Bryce Schimmon as a matter of fact, I hired him as the lead computer programmer for our effort. They gradually let me hire more people to feed into that and, of course, Bryce was with us for many years after that; I think he had about 20 years in before he retired. He was an incredible man who could do a lot with computers, more than most anyone I had seen. We had Jack Hemphill in place at that time. Jack Hemphill was one of the last of the old time RDs. That was an era when frankly many of the decisions were made by weekend meetings of the regional directors who gathered with a case of Jack Daniels and decided the following year's course with the Fish and Wildlife Service. That was how it was done, and frequently they didn't invite the director. Of course, the director prior to that time was not a political appointee, they were not accepted service. That didn't occur until later in the 70s. But that's how they did it, they would hole it; it took them two days or ten days, a lot of Jack Daniels, and they would sit down and iron out what we were going to do the next year and how to do the funding. And most of those regional directors were very politically connected, Jack Hemphill was one of them, an incredible man, he was a brilliant biologist, a good administrator, and a good politician, and yet he was a very humble man. When I first attended a Christmas party with my wife, Jack was at the party and my wife was asking who the various people were, you were there, and went down and she asked, "And who is that man collecting the garbage at the end of the table?" And I said, "That's our regional director, Jack Hemphill." To me, that said more than anything, someone who is going to participate for you and think well of his people, and we had others and I will mention a few in a few minutes. But an incredible man, and he supported the OBS movement, he was really pretty pro-technology in science. We had an incredible team.

We had a major project with the extended winter navigation; that was an attempt to extent navigation by about 45 days on the Great Lakes. It doesn't sound like much, but that was an immense amount of dollar value to the barge industries and the container industries. Unfortunately, we fought some very deleterious side effects. The Detroit Office of the Corps of Engineers funded us, and it was perhaps the largest funded project in the Fish and Wildlife Service at that time, so it was a big project; interesting because we never had a project manager for it. The deputy regional director was acting at that time and determined we didn't need one. Of course, the fight was on, it was like sharks in water for many. We applied the GIS because that was the only way we could track many of these developments. Again, Dr. Gross came in to help us. At different points we would travel around the Great Lakes and try to get information on vital resource areas from both Canadian and American scientists on both sides of the border, plus there were state as well as federal employees and some nonprofit groups, conservation groups, and nobody wanted to share, and they were officially directed not to share in some cases. So Dr. Gross and I talked about that and the next meeting we had we said, "Well, we are not asking you to identify important areas; what we would like you to do is shade in all the

areas that are not important." Now they hadn't been forbidden to do this and they were biologists, so they did that. So by exclusion, we could gradually track down the areas and once we identified what was important, then we could go back formally and ask. And eventually, that's how we got our information. It was very back door but it worked. And we had just an incredible array of scientific data as a result.

The extended winter navigation at first sounds simple but it wasn't. The effects, for example, of opening the ice in the winter, as you know, Isle Royale has a wolf-moose population that has been in a very delicate balance, and the recruitment from the wolf populations from the mainland is over the ice in the winter, so if you destroy that opportunity for the wolfs to replenish, that certainly changes the ecology, and Dr. Mech had studied that very extensively. There's a funny story, I'll relate that in a second. There were other effects like scouring, when a vessel of certain weights travels over in certain depths, it tends to create pressure waves, and those pressures waves scouring out the bottom and the vegetation is gone, as a matter of fact, it kills the aquatic life too. So we had to start thinking about what are the effects of longer periods of this type of usage by very large vessels. We had teams that went to Scandinavian countries to study how they break ice and interestingly enough, they use hover craft because the hover craft break ice very efficiently but they don't have the scouring effect, but they also use the metal ice breakers but less frequently now because they use the hover craft. That was one of the ideas that we were pursuing; there were a number of others. It was a very intense period of just breakthrough after breakthrough; we couldn't record the data fast enough. We were on the road 60% of the time traveling; you never knew what city you were in until you woke up. We had one funny incident; we were out in Los Angeles, in El Segundo actually, and checked into a motel, and I thought it very strange that the cars there had very high fences around them, beautiful cars, fences that were 10-15 feet, and very large men standing outside of each one of these. And we walked in to register and I reached for my pen and I noticed about a half dozen other people reaching inside their pockets of their suits. Well, it turned out it was a mafia meeting! And we had these very stereotypic, very short men in Hawaiian shirts no less, and very large bodyguards standing there. And so after that we learned to spend the next few days reaching very slowly into our pockets! Interesting what you run into.

The early days of this were just exciting; it was just developing left and right. We unfortunately ran into a snag. Well, let me back up a second. The Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission, which you probably have heard of, it was set up to study and collect data and develop cohesion among the states on the upper Mississippi River. It was a government unit, but it was separate from the Fish and Wildlife Service, and I was on a two-year detail to them as chairman of what was called the CIA (Computerized Inventory Analysis). We set up their technology for them and their data collection and display efforts. This was the precursor to the long-term resource monitoring development that we put in place in (unclear) Alaska, and it's still there today. And we were writing the proposal for the legislation that would fund it, and my part of the team was for the technology and which was, of course, a lot of money for that, and that was perhaps even the bulk of the money in many cases. We decided to try a novel approach, because we had observed many of the biological teams that pulled together state and

federal, and in several cases they broke out in fist fights, in one case rolling down the aisle in the meeting room engaged in a fist fight over the biology of it! Fortunately, we did not encounter that. What we did is, we got volunteers from the states and the local groups and our federal groups, and worked together on it, and nobody got paid for anything; it was strictly a volunteer on the part of the organizations and the people. We were the only ones to come in on time and under budget, for which I was severely scolded because I hadn't spent all the money. They gave us, I think, about $225,000 and I think I spent $17,000. It was the only one to go in unchallenged by the Congress when it was presented, we were very pleased with that; it was an incredible accomplishment and it framed the framework for the LTRM (Long-Term Resource Management). It was later funded, oh jeez, a quarter of a billion now, more than that probably over the years, and extensive array of data collection. So they got (unclear) on their part. We worked with them later on in designing their updates, for example, on their computer systems. Those days were very unusual. In one case we needed a color plotter, and the only place I could find one was in The Netherlands, so I managed to get a purchase out of the Dutch and have it transported here. It cost us $55,000 for that color plotter, it was the only color plotter of that type that I could get my hands on. Our optical equipment, which we used in the regional office out of the remote southern sensing center, was also purchased from a Dutch company, Old Delft, and it was top line equipment. We used it for many, many years, and then went downhill (unclear) after that. But we were both the research and operation section within the regional interest. Of course legal, it wasn't according to the guidelines but we did it anyway, nobody seemed to mind.

Aside, I mentioned Dr. David Mech, who is one of the foremost wolf researchers in the world. Dan Miller and I hired him originally in about 1971, I would guess, and we hired him because we knew he was an excellent researcher. He was a young man then, and his credentials coming from Isle Royale were fantastic, except we didn't have any place to put him, and to put a researcher on the regional staff was strictly forebode, you couldn't do that, and we couldn't research entities to hire him. So we negotiated a deal with Animal Damage Control, and we put him over there for about a year or so and they funded him, and that was Ki Faulkner at the time, you probably remember him. And Ki was good enough to recognize the talent that was there and hid him away, in essence, on the staff for over a year until we could get him into the research line and, subsequently, he made invaluable contributions to both wolf research and to the Fish and Wildlife Service for us, and very delicate endangered species work. He is now with, I think, the U.S. Geological Survey. He is located out here at the St. Paul campus of The University of Minnesota. I see him every once in awhile.

Dorothe:
He works for the university, doesn't he?

George Kubik:
He also teaches at the university.

Dorothe:
Teaches, yes, because I've been to the new wolf center up at Ely.

George Kubik:
He teaches extensively. I think their geological survey personnel are much like our co-op units, in that they have both a research and teaching function. It used to be we put a lot of our people through there before they became employees or just after they became employees, to go through these co-op units to develop these skills, and then we would pick them off as soon as they graduated.

Dorothe:
In the short time he was in the regional office, you could tell his mind was always just some place other than in the halls as he was walking by, because you could almost hear the wheels turning; a very smart man.

George Kubik:
Yes, a very intelligent man, and very good with people too, which is a very exceptional skill to have among research personnel.

Dorothe:
As a matter of fact, even though he did work with us for awhile, I could try and interview him.

George Kubik:
He would be interesting to interview, I would highly recommend that. He is still over there. As of about 3 or 4 months ago, I'd see him over there at Benson Hall. A very bright guy.

A funny story with him; we brought him in, he was a very young man at that time, just completing his studies or had just completed his studies, and Dan Miller and I took him down for lunch in the cafeteria, and as we were going through, he ordered some soup and a sandwich. He turned to watch a young lady walk by and as he swiveled, his tie went right through the soup and rested there, and he looked around and he looked down and he was so embarrassed. We assured him he probably wasn't the only one. So he came onboard with the research subsequent to that and did a wonderful job. As I said, a wonderful man, he would be great to do some interviews with.

Dorothe:
I read a few of his articles that were in the Minnesota Volunteer, that little book, and someplace else too; it just amazed me.

George Kubik:
A number of books out, and he's popularized it. He brought it to a level where people could really understand not only the wolf structure and biology but the interactions, and more importantly perhaps, the social economic concerns that accompanied that.

Dorothe:
Have you been up to Ely to see?

George Kubik:
Yes, I have.

Dorothe:
It's beautiful.

George Kubik:
As part of my thesis, I'm working on advance technologies that are just slowly emerging in the research labs, so I try to get out to these types of places and interview like you do. Over the years, I've interviewed thousands of our employees regarding how they thought about the future and what their expectations are, another subject.

But we had a number of just brilliant scientists onboard, they were just world famous. I did get into trouble on one of these expeditions though. It was the worst I've gotten in trouble for a long time, not first or the last but one of the more notorious. We had a conference coming up, a large conference with the Canadians and ourselves to deal with the extended winter navigation problems and opportunities, and we wanted to be at some place neutral, they didn't want to meet in the regional office here and we didn't want to meet up there, and so we picked Detroit. I made the reservations, I contracted with a motel there and rented a block of rooms for us, and I got a good deal for the government, I was really proud of myself, I had gotten a real good price. Well, Jack Gross was with me, and met a couple of Canadian scientists and a couple of others and we were expecting far more; we met a few of these at the airport. We came over, there were about eight or nine of us, and we were still expecting another 60-70, and we walked in and there were three young ladies behind the desk, and they were certainly well-endowed with interpersonal skills. Well, one of the one young ladies saw us, and I introduced myself and told her I had made a reservation for a block of rooms there, and she said, "Sir, would that be by the hour or by the day?" I had rented a house of ill repute! It was getting late and in Detroit you can't find much, especially in those kinds of blocks of rooms, so we had to stay at least that one night at this establishment. I remember old Jack Gross talking and complaining because when he sat down on his bed it promptly broke, and he said he was awake all night with noises from the other rooms in the hallways! And he went to get some aspirin out of a dispensing machine and got a real education! So, word of that got out and I was really in the dog house for awhile! A perfectly innocent mistake, but one I didn't live down for quite awhile.

In about 1979, we experienced a great let-down in the Fish and Wildlife Service and, in my opinion, removed us as a leader of Fish and Wildlife in the world and in the United States, and that was the demise of OBS. We had a new director, and he came around to talk to the troupes as they commonly do, Jim Gritman was the regional director at that time, and the new director said, "My first priority is information and technology transfer, and I support that with everything I have." And he listed two or three other of his goals. He summed at the end of the talk the same way, "My first priority is information and technology transfer," which was the crux of OBS. And I put my hand up when he asked if there were any questions, and I said, "Well, do I understand correctly?" And he said,

"Yes, I've repeated it often enough." I said, "Well, could you comment for us on why two days ago you signed a directive abolishing OBS and all information and technology transfers everywhere in the Fish and Wildlife Service?" And he looked at me and he said, "That's because it's everybody's job." And I put my hand up again and Gritman came over and said, "That will be enough questions for the director." And overnight it disappeared, and within a year or two it was entirely gone. People were given lists, and Dr. Gross was one, a formal letter from the director of words that he could not use in communications anymore. He was put into office and told not to do anything or say anything. And the first one on the list, interesting because I saw the letter, was the word "adapter," you couldn't use the word adapter.

Our fortunes as a scientific agency just disappeared with that, within two years it was essentially gone. Accompanying this, of course, we began to see more research being done from the universities and more from the states, (unclear), nor has it ever gotten back to that level anywhere in the United States that I've seen, or internationally for that matter. It was an utter disaster and a complete loss. Shortly thereafter, at the popular demand of most of our field people, we lost research. And this was highly the loss we've had in support of our own people, being that we should become solely a land management agency, and we did. Unfortunately, we have become one of many land management agencies, and not a leader in the Fish and Wildlife community in the sense of scientific knowledge and technology. We lost that. Geological Survey is very careful to emphasize they are now the leader in fish and wildlife biology knowledge and technology. I have attended a number of their briefings. They are very astute in doing that, they intend to become and are, in fact, the scientific (unclear), which unfortunately also includes fish and wildlife biology. I wish we had handled that differently, a great loss. Of course I was ripped, I didn't have a job anymore because OBS had disappeared.

Dorothe:
Is that how you happened to get into the human resources?

George Kubik:
Well, in 1980, I went over to become the senior computer management specialist in finance, no less, under Dale Geving.

Dorothe:
That was when you were right across the hall from us?

George Kubik:
Yes, exactly. Basically, my assignment was to set up a computer center for the region and to develop the necessary programming, whether we did it in house or contracted for it, to support predominantly administrative work, whether that was contracting or finance. We did inventories for example, for the law enforcement people. We also worked with the Washington staff of law enforcement to develop a current system such as it was. It was interesting because when the two men came out for implementing, they wanted to use Region 3 as the initial test guide, and I went to then regional director, Sam Marler, and said, "I've gone through the material, I don't think these folks are ready, I would

suggest we send them back to Washington or to another region." And he said, "Well, have you studied this?" I said, "Yes." Sam was extremely good, he felt if you did your job he would support you, and he called them in and sent them back the first time. So some months went by and we got another call and this time it wasn't an elective they were implementing, and I thought it very interesting when they came to Region 3 as one of the two pilot regions, that it was a combination of main frame and micro-computer effort, except over the years that they had developed it, that two people studied essentially in the same law enforcement area had never spoken to each other. They each had half of the project, and so when it came to hooking together to make sure that it worked, they had never done that before. So we lent our staff to them for several months to try and get that up and running. It eventually did run.

Dorothe:
Who were the two from Law Enforcement that came from Washington?

George Kubik:
You know, I can't remember their names, I just don't recall their names.

Dorothe:
I probably wouldn't know them anymore anyway.

George Kubik:
I don't recall. But, as you know, we limped along with that system for a long period.

Dorothe:
They weren't agents anyway.

George Kubik:
No, they were not, they were people hired for programming for the computer technology. But we had me! Good projects and, as a matter of fact, we were copied by other regions extensively during that period for programming; we used to ship it off to them. We had Bryce Shuman as I mentioned a moment ago. Bryce was very pro-American and proud of it, thank goodness, he was a (unclear) individual, but he did not like computers that were manufactured outside of the United States. So come April 1st, I walked down and I told him that we had a preliminary email from Washington saying they had procured a large purchase agreement for computers for all of the regions, and that they were being purchased from offshore. Well, he was just madder than a hatter; he went in to complain to Dale Geving, who was chief of the operation. I let a couple of hours go by and I told him they'd been identified as Kawasaki 500s and, of course, I made the name up, and Bryce had never heard of them, they are not going to put them in here. And he went down to see Dale Geving again. And then I told them that they sent out another email asking us if we had any color preference for the color of the machines. And then he went in and threatened to quit. Dale Geving finally came down and said, "Don't do that anymore." So we got by him on that one!

A short time later, a couple of years, I had the opportunity, Dale Geving had retired, and we were setting up, I made a proposal for a regional information data center, and we created one in Regional 3. It was the first of its major type other than Region 6. I believe they had a mini unit down there. I was under Tom Kerze, who was the ARD for administration for many years, and the idea was to centralize all of the administrative functions. Unfortunately, he said the operating programs kept their own computer staffs, so it was somewhat difficult to reconcile at times, but we made it, we standardized, the first region to do so, on the IBM PCs as they were then called, I know Microsoft Office. And we found the other regions by and large were buying Rainbows, they were buying Radio Shacks, and this went on for several years, and they had to dump them all, literally just dumped them overnight because they couldn't use them. The Radio Shacks lasted for several years but they wouldn't network. So we standardized first on the PCs, I know Microsoft Office, which we still have today in both cases, but we also set up the first regional land, it was data point base, you probably recall those, and it was the first land setup in the service, locally networked in the regions. And we set the standards for that, and the exchange protocols. We had many other firsts at that time, and we had region after region, reluctantly in many cases, come in to look at the setup so that they could replicate them elsewhere. Eventually we changed from a Datapoint to other brands. Datapoint was the first one to offer local area networks that were sophisticated, that is why we went with them, and later, as more joined the field, we standardized on more common standards. So we set national standards for many, many years.

During this period, Washington had very tight control on purchasing. You could only purchase up to $15 worth of equipment, hardware or software, after that you had to get the Washington office approval, had to have signed approval, and they had rather elaborate detail justification statements that you had to follow. I figured enough of that after a very short order because it was plain to see they were just weighing the things to see how heavy they were, their justifications. So we developed, Bryce and I, a program that wrote these, and you would just plug in a few key words and it would generate a couple of hundred pages of justification, if it was a cable, $20.

Dorothe:
When was this?

George Kubik:
That would have been in the early '80s, mid '80s.

Dorothe:
I was still working there then but I don't remember any.

George Kubik
That was because we never had you people do it in the field. We wrote them up ourselves because there wasn't any sense in tying up biologists and administrative people of high value to write these nonsense justifications. So we put it on a word processor and generated these automatically and we'd just insert the words. Finally, it got to be so voluminous and so heavy, and of course they had to keep copies in Washington and were

filling so many filing cabinets, that they gave Region 3 a (unclear). They raised ours to a $2,500 limit; they kept the other regions under the limit, because we had very close relationships, we worked very closely with the contracting officer in Region 3, so we were very squeaky clean on our purchases. Unlike many of the other regions who were kind of loose about it, we were very squeaky clean. And the contracting officer was an immense benefit in helping us with that and, of course, that lightened his load too in not having to do all of the justifications. So we did a lot of that.

Unfortunately, we also ran into some snags. I remember giving a series of three briefings, each one was cut short, and they were delivered to our regional director, he wanted new technology. At first we identified the technology, told him what we could do and then later how it could impact how we did work. On the third briefing, they finally told me, "Look, don't come up again, we don't want to hear this again. No more briefings on this subject, it's impractical and it's no use to our agency." The technology was called the internet. And as you know, almost all of our business operations today are built around the internet.

So, bless our hearts, the biologists are super good at biology and dedication to biology, but they have virtually no feel for what's coming down the line. Time and again, I was just surprised over and over by the lack of foresight. A few individuals differ from that, but by and large, the agency is very poorly equipped to look to the future. It's very historically oriented, brought out by the, I was in the Center for Creative Leadership Program for several years, and we met at the National Conservation Education Center, and when it came my turn for my presentation on a particular subject, I said, "I've got something that's vital for you; I want you all to pretend that you are venture capitalists, venture capitalists for the next hour, and we're going to walk around this center and you tell me what you see at the end and if you will invest your money." We walked around and they came back and I said, "Well, are you going to invest your money in the Fish and Wildlife Service future? And they said, "Absolutely," every one of them. And I said, "What did you notice when you walked around as a venture capitalist?" And they gave me various answers. I said, "We have a very rich history, a very rich tradition in the Fish and Wildlife Service, and it's extremely well done at this center. Tell me, what did you see about the future of the agency?" And they looked around and they said, "Not a single thing." We walked around for an hour, and they'd been here four days, "We've never seen anything on where this agency is going deeper into the future." Not one diorama, not one document, nothing. I said, "You are venture capitalists who are investing in the future of this organization, how do you vote with your dollars now?" And every one of them turned their vote to not invest in the future of the agency! An important lesson here: we need to be concerned not only with the past and the present, but more so with the future. Because of the rapid changes occurring, our life depends on it, and the future of fish and wildlife resources depends on it.

Many years ago I suggested there will be a time when other entities will administer our national wildlife refuges in conjunction with our agency, and I was just hooted off the stage. And now we have several refuges that are administered by contract groups. That's not going to be the end of it; there are many other developments that are occurring daily

that we are not aware of, we have no eyes and ears to look at what's occurring around us or what's emerging around us, and that's disastrous for any agency. I've talked with the EPA people extensively, they have this. I've talked to the Corps people, they have it. Fish and Wildlife Service doesn't. I'm not saying the others are very advanced, but they are there at least, they are now scanning, and even some futures groups in EPA as well as in the Corps. I don't see anything, I never have seen anything like that in the Fish and Wildlife Service. I have never seen anything like that really in Interior to speak of.

I worked there for a number of years and enjoyed (unclear) was a wonderful field, abruptly emerging, it started to settle down, we had standards in place. I have kind of restless shoes, and it's always been very nice that way, it allowed me to carry on different areas that are unusual; exploring, developing.

My next assignment was with the regional director and deputy regional director as a special assistant, and I think the title was a strategic planner for the region.

Dorothe:
What was it?

George Kubik:
A strategic planner; and nobody knew what a strategic planner was.

Dorothe:
I wouldn't know.

George Kubik:
I wasn't sure either because we never developed an EE for it; we finally developed one after I was there a year and a half or so, they kind of spelled out roughly what it was. I worked most closely with Marvin Moriarity, and I have to say of any Fish and Wildlife Service employee or manager, Marvin was the most people-oriented; he is one of the best managers I've ever seen, and he had vision, he had vision unlike anyone I've ever seen in this agency. Historically, I've never seen anything compared with that, and to this day I've never seen anything to compare with it. Working around him was exciting every moment. His goal for each employee was to be successful number one, and when we talked about performance objectives, he had only a three word definition, and that was "Make it go." Whenever you had an idea, we'd discuss it, and he'd say, "Look, I can't give you any money, can't give you any people, but I want you to make this project go." And so that's how it worked for him. I would go down and I would talk to whatever program it was, refuges, hatcheries, enforcement, and say, "Look, we would like to try implementing this, let's develop it." He was an incredible visionary. And now of course he is already out in Region 5. I can just imagine that region is just humming with "make it go" projects.

Dorothe:
They needed a new director out there. Mamie was there and she was doing a pretty good job but it wasn't at all like something like Marvin would do.

George Kubik:
Yes, he's an energy generator, everybody around him feels energized. I've never met an employee who didn't look up to that man, just incredible in my opinion. I've seen a great many regional directors over the time and met with many others, but I would have to single him out as being the greatest visionary that I have ever seen in this agency. I wish we had many, many more.

Dorothe:
I had wished that he could have just stayed in Region 3 as the regional director.

George Kubik:
Yes! Had he stayed I would have stayed also. As a matter of fact, if it wasn't for finishing the degree, I would have gone with him to Region 5 because we talked about that. I felt so intensely on that man, if I hadn't been so close to retirement, I would have gone out there in a heartbeat. And why he wasn't appointed regional director decades ago is beyond me.

I think the agency, by and large, is afraid of change; it really boils down to that. Magnificent dedication, incredible people, but they are very, very afraid of changing. Marvin wasn't afraid of change.

One of the products we worked on during that period, and I worked on it as dual project with Susan Redman over in (unclear); Susan being a very brilliant person herself, and along with Marvin, those two the greatest visionaries. She was incredible looking ahead of application areas. So she and I developed the proposal for the internet reporting system, to report once and use often, and it did away with, we figured, 60-70 reports at one time. And it would generate these accomplishments in a format that we shared with Washington, it could be shared with Congressmen, it could be shared with the states just by pushing a few buttons. It generated news releases. That was an incredible piece, and they are still using it as a basis, at least when I left, as a basis for the reporting in the Fish and Wildlife Service in Region 3. The other regions gradually went over to that, and I understand now they are on the same system. But this was a wonderful application of the internet, and Hartwig supported this wholeheartedly. We thought differently on many things, we thought very similarly on many things, but I have to take my hat off to him by saying, "We're going to enforce it, and if you don't record it here, it isn't done. I don't care where else you put it, but if it isn't here, it isn't done." And, "Everyone in this region is going to have daily access to a computer and the internet, I don't care if they are a project leader, maintenance man, or technician, everybody has access to it." That gave a boost to computerization in the service. Right then, as you recall, we had a big influx of micro-computers that were linked to a land and, of course, that was a great communication problem because many of the telephone companies were mom and pop type in the woods, but we got every station linked up and eventually every person linked up. And I thought that was a tremendous accomplishment by the region. My hat’s off to

Susan (unclear) on a large part of that, she was just relentless. I enjoyed many, many sessions with her. She has since gone over to become chief of planning for the Forest Service last I heard, and I can't think of a more astute individual for that kind of job. Boundless energy, just incredible energy, like Marvin, those two are just firehouses, hard to keep up with.

Many other projects; a couple of years went by and, of course, people start to ask why you have that position up there, and I know there's pressure not to create those positions and as ceilings and knowledge became more tight, and with some changes in personnel and ARD for administration, and I was appointed ARD for the Office of Human Resources, and in vestige, the Office of Strategic Planning, although that kind of faded with time. The Office of Human Resources was very different, very enjoyable. I was astounded by the quality of the staff, headed by Peggy Nelson over there, and our goal was innovation again. We were one of the smallest of offices of human resources in the field of the Fish and Wildlife Service, but our innovation was always number one. We created first after first in there including, and this is Peggy's effort, the first handbook for disability guidelines in the Fish and Wildlife Service. When I went in there and started looking at it, we had a lot of problems with accommodation in the Fish and Wildlife Service, and still do. As a matter of fact, Interior itself, you could not get into the main Interior building via wheelchair until the 1990s; you had to go around back and load up on the dock, which is inexcusable. But our stations repeatedly advertised themselves as handicapped accessible, and the preferred word, of course, is disability. But that's the way they reported it, as handicapped accessible, and.....

Dictation Ends

Key Words: George Kubik, GIS (Geographic Information Systems), futures research, Dr. Arthur Harkins, StoryTech, The Guide for the 21st Century, Lester Horne, Inner Agency Board of Examiners, Soil Service Commission, William Sontag, Lester Horne, Buzza Building, Fish and Wildlife Service, 1000 Sixth West Lake Street, personnel management, Goodman K. Larson, Dan Miller, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Job Corp Centers, Job Corp at Brooklyn, Ohio, Tamarack Job Corp, Agassiz Job Corp, Middle River, Minnesota, Fort Clinton closure, JC Bryant, Mingo Job Corp Center, Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge Center, Southern Illinois University, Department of Labor, James "Doc" Elder, U.S. Forest Service, habitat evaluation procedure development, Robert Burwell regional director, field operations, biologist, dirt biologist, Horicon National Refuge, Mayville, Wisconsin, Gus Bonde, Guttenberg National Fish Hatchery, Eldon Saeugling, Dick Huber, Robert Welford, Ed Crozier, Sherburne National Wildlife Center, OBS, Eastern Energy and Land Use Team, Western Energy and Land Use Team, Oil Shell Studies, Geographic Information Systems, Alaskan Information Management System, Extended Winter Navigation Project, Dr. C.S. Holling, Canadian spruce budworm study/problem, International Institute for Applied Systems, Adaptive Environmental Assessment, Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge, University of Minnesota, Dr. Jack Gross, ecosystem, spawning the nursery atlases of the Great Lakes,

National Fish Hatchery System, multi-spectral scanning of the upper Mississippi River, Dr. Merle Meyer, low-level spectral scanning, regional ITS office, remote sensing center, National Wetland Inventory, Jack Hemphill, extended winter navigation project, Detroit Office of the Corp of Engineers, Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission, CIA (Computerized Inventory Analysis), LTRM (Long-Term Resource Management), Dr. David Mech, Dan Miller, Clarence "Ki" Faulkner, Animal Damage Control, wolf research, endangered species studies, U.S. Geological Survey, Ely International Wolf Center, Jim Gritman, Dale Geving, Sam Marler, Tom Kerze, Marvin Moriarity, Peggy Nelson, Office of Human Resources, Office of Strategic Planning, Eugene Spika, Pete Mahn, Gene Kasperson, Audrey Berg, Art Benoll, Audrey Berg (she was in Region 3's Personnel Office, Harlene Loftis (worked in Personnel), Bobby Franz (worked in Refuges - was the Admin,. Officer when she retired), Bryce Schimmon (retired from R3), Eugene Spika(w/OPM (Office of Personnel Management), Pete Bahn (w/private industry), Gene Kasperson (with Immigration), Kasperson and Benoll were mentioned in his interview, but they are not FWS people - Spika, BAHN was w/private industry